

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/AND/CH:RSSTEVEN
APPROVED BY THE DEPUTY SECRETARY
ARA/AND:MRBARNEBEY
ARA:JBUSHNELL
JUSTICE:EMPROPPER
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DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
ARA, D, P AND L ONLY
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION:
CHRISTOPHER INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR BARROS

REFERENCE: SANTIAGO 4515

1. CHILEAN AMBASSADOR BARROS WAS CALLED IN BY THE ACTING
SECRETARY AT 2:15 PM JUNE 15, FOLLOWING YOUR RECOMMENDATION
IN REFTEL. ALSO PRESENT WERE BUSHNELL, BARNEBEY, STEVEN,
PROPPER AND OXMAN.

2. AFTER GREETING BARROS CORDIALLY AND REGRETTING NECESSITY
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TO RAISE TROUBLESOME ISSUE WITH HIM SO SOON AFTER HIS
ARRIVAL IN THE U.S., CHRISTOPHER REFERRED TO COOPERATION
SO FAR EXTENDED BY GOC IN LETELIER CASE, AND TO PRESIDENT
CARTER'S RECOGNITION OF THIS IN CREDENTIALS PRESENTATION
CEREMONY JUNE 5. NOTING THAT WE NOW APPEARED TO BE AT A
POINT OF DIFFICULTY, HE EMPHASIZED CONCERN AT HIGHEST
LEVELS OF USG OVER CASE. HE RECOGNIZED FACT THAT GOC

COULD NOT PRODUCE SOME THINGS WE MIGHT WANT, SUCH AS TESTIMONY OF UNWILLING PERSONS, BUT THAT TWO MATTERS WE HAD RAISED DID APPEAR TO BE WITHIN THE POWER OF THE GOC TO GRANT.

3. CHRISTOPHER SAID THAT PARAGUAYAN TESTIMONY WAS NEEDED ON MATTER OF PASSPORTS ISSUED TO TOWNLEY AND FERNANDEZ. GOP HAD CONFIRMED FACTS, BUT WANTED GOC TO INDICATE ITS WISH THAT GOP COOPERATE WITH U.S. INVESTIGATION. THIS APPEARED TO BE SOMETHING THAT GOC COULD DO, AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE CASE. SECONDLY, CHRISTOPHER REFERRED TO COL. ITURRIAGA'S TESTIMONY, ITURRIAGA'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO TESTIFY, AND THE NEED FOR GOC CONSENT. HE CITED TIME CONSTRAINTS UPON THE INVESTIGATION AND REEMPHASIZED OUR BELIEF THAT THE REQUESTS WERE REASONABLE IN LIGHT OF GOC ASSURANCES OF COOPERATION. HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER PROBLEMS.

4. PROPPER NOTED THAT U.S. SIDE HAD COOPERATED AS PROMISED, WITH REQUESTED INTERVIEW BY FBI WITH FORMER CIA DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALTERS HAVING BEEN SENT TO LEGATT BUENOS AIRES WITHIN LAST 24 HOURS FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY TO GOC IN SANTIAGO. PROPPER REMINDED BARROS THAT INFORMATION REGARDING CONTRERAS' CALL TO COL. GUANES IN PARAGUAY WILL COME OUT IN TRIAL, AS IT HAD BEEN CONFIRMED BY FBI. ADDITIONALLY, PROPPER SAID THAT ACCORDING TO PAPPALARDO THE SECRET

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CALL HAD COME FROM PINOCHET TO STROESSNER, AND THIS TOO MIGHT COME OUT AT TRIAL. INVESTIGATORS ARE NOW AWARE THAT THIS WAS INACCURATE, BUT PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING FACTS IN TRIAL, WITHOUT GOP TESTIMONY, COULD ONLY BE PREJUDICIAL TO GOC. PROPPER STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF CALL BY GOC TO GOP IN MATTER OF GUANES' TESTIMONY. HE SAID THAT THE GOP WAS UPSET, AS CONTRERAS HAD TOLD GUANES AT THE TIME THAT DINA MISSION TO THE U.S. WAS FOR INVESTIGATION OF ECONOMIC MATTERS RELATING TO CHILEAN INTERESTS, BUT NOW KNEW IT WAS TO ASSASSINATE LETELIER. FERNANDEZ TESTIMONY TAKEN IN SANTIAGO CONFIRMS THIS, HE TOLD BARROS.

5. CHRISTOPHER AGAIN STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION AND THE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR RELATIONS SHOULD COOPERATION END. HE SAID THAT A SUDDEN FREEZE IN COOPERATION ALREADY WELL UNDERWAY WAS WORSE THAN LACK OF COOPERATION FROM THE START, AS SUSPICIONS ARE RAISED REGARDING MOTIVATIONS. HE SAID THAT COOPERATION ON THESE REQUESTS WAS "ESSENTIAL TO GOOD AND IMPROVING RELATIONS."

6. BARROS STRESSED THAT HE WAS NOT WELL INFORMED ON CASE, BUT WOULD TRY TO HELP. HE ASKED WHO GENERAL WALTERS WAS,

AND EXPLANATIONS WERE MADE BY PROPPER AND OTHERS. BARROS THEN SAID THAT HE WAS WORRIED THAT THE INVESTIGATION COULD APPEAR AS "POLITICAL PRESSURE." HE NOTED WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL OF JUNE 10 WHICH CALLED FOR PINOCHET'S RESIGNATION. HE GRANTED THAT IT WAS NOT A USG POSITION, BUT IT HAD GENERATED A STRONG REACTION IN CHILE, WITH A FLARE OF

ANTI-AMERICANISM WHICH COULD GROW IN CHILE, AND IN LATIN AMERICA. ALL PARTIES SHOULD BE CAREFUL, HE SAID, NOT TO ALLOW THE MATTER TO BECOME POLITICAL. HE HOPED THAT THE MATTER COULD BE DISCUSSED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CUBILLOS HERE NEXT WEEK (OASGA), WHEN ALL HAD HAD TIME FOR "SECOND THOUGHTS."

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7. BARROS SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A CABLE FROM SANTIAGO JUNE 14 REPORTING AMBASSADOR LANDAU'S MEETING WITH CUBILLOS ON JUNE 12. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT TESTIMONY MIGHT BE GIVEN ABOUT AN ALLEGED CALL BY PINOCHET TO PARAGUAY, "WHEN THE USG KNEW THAT THIS WAS UNTRUE." HE HAD ALSO HEARD THAT IT WAS THE CIA WHICH REQUESTED THE PARAGUAYAN PASSPORTS FOR TOWNLEY AND FERNANDEZ. PROPPER CORRECTED THIS IMPRESSION. BARROS THEN ASKED IF THE PARAGUAYAN TESTIMONY COULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH THE GOP IN ASUNCION. WHEN TOLD THAT FBI HAD DISCUSSED TESTIMONY WITH GOP, BARROS QUICKLY QUESTIONED WHETHER DISCUSSIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE AT "DIPLOMATIC LEVEL." WHEN ASSURED THAT THEY HAD AND THAT GOP WAS READY TO COOPERATE AFTER GOC CALL, HE LEFT SUBJECT AND TURNED TO MECHANICS OF ITURRIAGA TESTIMONY.

8. PROPPER REPLIED THAT TESTIMONY WAS WANTED FROM ITURRIAGA IN PERSON, IN WASHINGTON AND IN SECRET, BUT THAT THE POSSIBILITY EXISTED THAT THE TESTIMONY COULD BE TAKEN BY THE FBI IN ANOTHER PLACE ON "NEUTRAL" GROUND SUCH AS BUENOS AIRES. HE SAID THAT THE FBI WAS NOT PREPARED TO RETURN TO SANTIAGO BECAUSE OF THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED THERE BY INFLAMMATORY PRESS ATTACKS.

9. BARROS SAID HE WOULD TRANSMIT A FULL REPORT OF THE INTERVIEW AND OUR REQUESTS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE RETURNED AGAIN TO HIS CONCERN OVER PUBLICITY, AND OVER LEAKS INVOLVING THE CASE. HE SAID THAT LEAKS APPEARED TO COME FROM THE SMALL CIRCLE AROUND THE INVESTIGATION, GIVEN APPARENT INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF CASE REVEALED BY SOURCES IN THE PRESS. PROPPER REMINDED BARROS THAT MUCH OF THE PRESS REPORTING HAD COME FROM PUBLIC COURT RECORDS, SUCH AS THE HEARING IN NEW JERSEY ON THE TRANSFER OF A
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CUBAN-AMERICAN DEFENDANT TO WASHINGTON. BARROS INDICATED INTEREST IN OBTAINING COPIES OF SUCH RECORDS. HE CLOSED WITH QUESTIONS ON ITURRIAGA'S WILLINGNESS TO COME TO THE U.S. AND SEIZED UPON "NEW INFORMATION" THAT TESTIMONY MIGHT BE TAKEN IN A THIRD COUNTRY. CHRISTOPHER ENDED THE INTERVIEW WITH A FINAL STRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION IN THE CASE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, INVESTIGATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE155394
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RSSTEVEN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780255-0806
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780643/aaaablnt.tel
Line Count: 182
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c7eb4086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY, STADIS
Reference: 78 SANTIAGO 4515
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2297014
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION: CHRISTOPHER INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR BARROS
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI, (LETELIER, ORLANDO)
To: SANTIAGO
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c7eb4086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014